

Episode 87: Why does the mustard matter?

by Shannon Perry

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

NARRATOR

Ahhhhhhh, it's good to be back on our bridge. How long were we gone? Everything's covered in dust.

N2

I think that came in on my new cowboy boots.

NARRATOR

I told you to turn off the Authenticity Generator.

N2

I did! Just not right away. I like the hawk sound.

Hawk-on-high-clifftop whistle. You know the one.

NARRATOR

Great. How much of this dust is actually dung?

N2

You sure you don't want to let Joe mop in here?

NARRATOR

You know we can't do that.

N2

Narrators' Code, I know, I know.

NARRATOR

Not just the code. Can you imagine if Captain Madeline knew about us? The confusion, the explaining, the bad math....

N2

Yikes. You have a point. So what's happening now?

NARRATOR

No clue. Let's find out.

AN ABANDONED SHOPPING MALL, POPULAR IN THE MID-1980S

Hum of sandwich machine. Then that "weird noise" again as

Julie, Joe, LBF, Madeline, and Pipi tumble out, hollering. We hear Pipi's wings flapping.

JOE

Drop and roll! DROP AND ROLL!

MADELINE

Would you stop that? You're gonna be like the boy who shouted rolf.

JULIE

"Rolf"?

MADELINE

YES. Like he was gonna throw up. And everybody backed away, but he never did until the one time he did it and no one believed him and he rolfed all over everybody. Which really taught... him ... a lesson? Hang on... he's not the one with barf in his hair...

PIPISTRELLE

So, in these instances, do you explain or wait for her to reason it through?

JOE

Neither. Life is too short.

LE BICHON FRISE

Would you mind perching, ma chauve-souris? [shōve sue ree] Your flappy flappies are giving me the chilly willies.

JOE

Maybe consider warmer pants.

LE BICHON FRISE

Ehhh?

PIPISTRELLE

Very well. But my balance is ... off. Something about my pod discombobulated my inner ear.

Pipi lands, with a bit of a "**whoops!**" and some crashing and thumping and various other bad-landing sounds.

MADELINE

Well, at least the lights are on in

this one. WHAT is that smell??

JULIE
Cinnabon. We're at The Mall.

JOE
Circa, what, 1980s? I see Aladdin's
Castle, Waldenbooks, Kay-Bee Toys,
Claire's-

MADELINE
Ooooo, Claire's Boutique! I've been
wanting to get my ears double-pierced.

PIPISTRELLE
There's no one there to do the
piercing, Captain.

MADELINE
Never stopped me before! Last one
there's a stud!

[running footsteps]

PIPISTRELLE
You'd think with so much experience on
the receiving end, she'd be better at
insults.

JULIE
Uhhhhhhh.... someone's in Famous Barr.

LE BICHON FRISE
There is a bar? Avec les cocktails?

JULIE
Famous Barr.

LE BICHON FRISE
Oui. Even better! Why is it famous?
Perhaps for its outrageous appetizers?
Last one there gets a Shirley to the
Temple!

[running footsteps]

PIPISTRELLE
Again I must ask, have I misunderstood
the "last-one-there-is-a plus insult"
arrangement?

JOE

Pretty sure Famous Barr was a clothing franchise from the Earth 80s.

JULIE

Should we go in?

JOE

They do have a housewares division, I believe.

PIPISTRELLE

Is that relevant?

JOE

Have you seen the bucket I've been forced to use? Please. The 2100s called and want their crappy bucket back.

JULIE

It's sort of an obsession with you, huh.

Sound of Papi's wings.

JOE

Seriously, you're going to fly? It's, like, right there.

PIPISTRELLE

I take it you prefer I walk.

JOE

Frenchie there wasn't wrong about your backdraft.

PIPISTRELLE

I beg your pardon?

JULIE

I think he means your "downwash."

PIPISTRELLE

Excuse me?

JOE

You're windy.

PIPISTRELLE

That was my chair.

JULIE

Huh?

PIPISTRELLE

I believe it was the dog's fault.

JOE

What are you talking about?

PIPISTRELLE

Human interlocution is very difficult.
I believe I am meant to blame anal
eructations upon furniture or canines.

JOE

All I got out of that was "human,"
"difficult," and "anal." Just don't
fly over my head, OK?

JULIE

She's a bat, not a seagull. Yes, Pipi,
we prefer you walk.

PIPISTRELLE

As opposed to flying.

JULIE

Yes.

PIPISTRELLE

Because my wings generate wind.

JOE

Like being caught in a jet stream.

PIPISTRELLE

I see. One thing: have you ever seen a
bat walk?

JULIE

Huh. Can't say I have.

PIPISTRELLE

Vampire bats are adept perambulators.
They are also an outlier in the
Chiroptera family. I say this to warn
you.

Sound of scuttling. Startled and horrified reaction sounds
from **Julie and Joe**.

JOE
What are you doing?

PIPISTRELLE
I'm walking.

JOE
I know walking, and you, Missy, are
NOT walking.

JULIE
(jumping in quickly) Perhaps you go
ahead and fly, and we'll just deal
with it.

Pipi flies ahead.

JOE
That was one of the creepiest things
I've ever seen. And I've been on this
ship with a REAL vampire.

JULIE
(shudders) Don't ever ask her to do
that again.

There's a bang and some distant moaning and shuffling.

JULIE
What was that?

JOE
Let's, uhhhh... pick up the pace.

They trot into Famous Barr.

PLUTO
Welcome!

JULIE
Pluto! Where have you been?

PLUTO
Ahhhhhhh, my lady and I have been on a
grand adventure. We started with a
tour of my realm, but as the sulphur
began to rebuild, even her sweet syrup
scent could not compete. Since then,
we have been touring the cosmos,
tasting the delights our galaxy has to
offer. Though I must say, the greatest

delight in the galaxy was always the one at my side.

JOE

Hey, do those big security gates work any more? Anybody see a switch?

JULIE

Where is Donna?

PLUTO

I believe she is roaming the section referred to as "beauty" – and now it truly earns its title, having her within its borders.

JULIE

Is he always like this?

JOE

Why do you think I ducked into People's Drugs? Here. Dramamine for emotion sickness.

JULIE

That's not how it works.

JOE

(interrupting) Mix it with a little bourbon, and you'll stomach the sticky stuff way better. Now where the hell is that switch?

COUNTER GIRL

May I help you?

JULIE

Yikes! Where did she come from?

PLUTO

Oh, yes. I forgot about the little sprite. She pops up now and again, offering assistance but rendering none.

JOE

I guess child labor laws don't apply to animatronics. How old is she?

COUNTER GIRL

May I help you?

JOE

Yes. Please lower the security gate.

PIPISTRELLE

There you all are. I'm afraid I overshot the front door. Navigating in small spaces is tricky.

PLUTO

Might I ask you to land, please? You are blowing the mustard off my soft pretzel.

PIPISTRELLE

Very well. Whoops!

Lots of crashing noises.

PLUTO

That seemed unnecessarily dramatic.

PIPISTRELLE

Perhaps you'd like to try perching on a mannequin's arm? I apologize for the relocation of your mustard.

COUNTER GIRL

Did you say "mustard"? Contacting mall security.

JULIE

Security? Speaking of unnecessarily dramatic....

JOE

No, this is good. How many security people you got? Bring 'em all.

JULIE

Are you ... sweating? What's going on?

PIPISTRELLE

(speech a little wobbly on slippery perch) Perhaps we can finally get some answers re: condiments.

NARRATOR

If only.

N2

Do you hear that weird sound? Like a

bunch of people moaning in pain?

NARRATOR

Can't be. The food court hasn't been open in decades.

N2

Then where did Pluto get that pretzel?

Sounds of a Segway or golf cart or some other mall-cruising machine. The moaning is definitely louder now.

SECURITY

Good afternoon! How may I be of assistance?

JOE

Yeah, we're needing to lower the security gate.

SECURITY

Good afternoon! How may I be of assistance?

JOE

Ah hell, he doesn't see me. Pluto – say something to him.

PLUTO

Me? Speak to an underling? I think not.

JULIE

I'll try. Hey, there!

SECURITY

Good afternoon! How may I be of assistance?

JULIE

What is that weird noise?

JOE

That weird noise is why we need to get this gate down. Fast. Pipi, your turn.

PIPISTRELLE

Excuse me?

COUNTER GIRL

Yes?

JOE

OK, OK, good. The girl hears Pipi. We can work with that.

PIPISTRELLE

I speak to her, she speaks to the security fellow.

JULIE

Anybody else hearing... moaning?

LE BICHON FRISE

Mon dieu, this place, she is paradise!

Julie, Joe, Pluto, Pipi start coughing.

JULIE

(cough, wheeze) I'd ask where you've been, but I think we can guess.

LE BICHON FRISE

The parfumerie is full of these little girls who spritz you with so many glorious scents. It is *magnifique*!

JOE

(cough, wheeze) How many trips through there did you take? You smell like Saturday night at a sorority house.

PLUTO

(cough, wheeze) My eyes are watering from the delirium of smells, but these are not all the smells I'm detecting.

JOE

Pipi, tell the counter girl to get the security guard to lower the gate. NOW.

JULIE

What is your obsession with that gate and holy shit are those zombies?!

JOE

GATE. NOW!

PIPISTRELLE

Yes! Would you mind terribly requesting of the security guard

JOE

Pick up the pace, Pipi, these are the fast kind!

PIPISTRELLE

that he manage for us the lowering of the

JULIE

You've got to be kidding.

PIPISTRELLE

IT'S MY PROGRAMMING. SHUT UP.

COUNTER GIRL

I'm sorry?

PIPISTRELLE

Would you please relate to the security guard that there is an imminent threat that requires the immediate lowering of the security gate?

Silence except for moaning and shuffling, coming closer.

PIPISTRELLE

She's not hearing me.

JOE

Frise, talk to the security guard!

LE BICHON FRISE

You called me stinky.

JOE

WHAT? OK, I'm sorry. You smell like a sunny day in a garden. Talk to the guard!

LE BICHON FRISE

You see? It is not so very difficult to get along. *Monsieur?*

Silence.

LE BICHON FRISE

BAH! He is ignoring me! Will he ignore me when his innards are spilled across the floor???

JOE

Don't kill the guard. We need him to close the gate.

SECURITY

It's not safe to block the store entrance, ladies and gentlemen. May I show you to a table?

JULIE

No! And Pipi, you told her to shut up!

PIPISTRELLE

Is my rudeness really pertinent right now? And I told YOU to shut up.

JULIE

She follows your direction, and the last order she heard you give was to shut up!

PIPISTRELLE

Oh! Yes! Unshut! Shut dow-

JULIE

(interrupts "down") NO!!! "Shut down" is NOT the opposite of shut up. Uhhhhh.... Think 80s, 80s... we have to say her name!

JOE

Surely not.

SECURITY

We have a very fine list this year, if you prefer younger vintages. And may I say, sir, the writer is showing considerable restraint in not making jokes about bungholes and cork taint.

PLUTO

Is she, though?

PIPISTRELLE

BOYS. What do you mean, say her name?

JULIE

Leet messed with all the animatronics, right? And he loves silly stuff. It's like a jinx. We have to say her name!

LE BICHON FRISE
But what is it?

PIPISTRELLE
Name tag! She's surely wearing a name tag.

PLUTO
I don't see one. There is a discarded cardigan on her chair. Perhaps the tag is there?

JULIE
I'll look!

Sound of a serious karate chop.

COUNTER GIRL
Hiiiiii yah!

JULIE
Yikes! Ok, no touching the cardigan. Oh, for crying out loud, the zombies are at Orange Julius!

SECURITY
There may, however, be some discussion of length and mouth-feel, as those really are too good to pass up.

JULIE
What the hell is this guy talking about? Never mind, who cares. Now what do we do?

JOE
OK, we can't see the tag, so we're gonna have to get her to put her sweater on.

PIPISTRELLE
It's not chilly enough in here!

JULIE
The controls for the air conditioning!

JOE
Not fast enough. The zombies are at Crate and Barrel, and who knows where the air conditioning controls are!

PIPISTRELLE

You want chilly? I'll give you chilly!
Score one for wings!

The sounds of wings and wind.

LE BICHON FRISE

Could you stop? You are poof poofing
away my scents!

PIPISTRELLE

Really? Score two for wings!

PLUTO

It's working. She's drawing on her
cardigan. I can just see the tag....
Emma! It's Emma!

PIPISTRELLE

Emma!

COUNTER GIRL/EMMA

May I help you?

PIPISTRELLE

Tell the guard to lower the gate!
Hurry!

COUNTER GIRL/EMMA

Cyril, could you lower the security
gates, please?

SECURITY/CYRIL

On it!

Sounds of a hydraulic gate being lowered, slowly and with
much labor.

JOE

Damn these things are slow! They're at
Elaine's Cooking.... Now Claire's ...
oh hell!

JULIE

The Captain! Surely she has sense
enough to stay- Yeah, I hear it.

The moaning is very close now. Some are right at the gate.

LE BICHON FRISE

Mon dieu! They are coming under the

gate!

JOE

You're an assassin, do something!

LE BICHON FRISE

Un, I assassin LIVE peoples, and *deux*,
I am an assassin FOR HIRE. I cannot
just go around-

PIPISTRELLE

KILL!

The sound of throwing stars and much fighting. **Pipi, Joe, Julie**, give us some good fighting sounds; **LBF**, you too, but not for a few lines yet, you lazy bastard.

JOE

PLUTO! Can't you freeze people?

PLUTO

Live people!

JULIE

Don't you rule the dead?

PLUTO

Their souls, not their bodies!

PIPISTRELLE

An assassin who won't kill and a god
with no dominion. And you complain
about a little breeze!

SECURITY/CYRIL

Eh, voila! The gate is down. Is there
anything else I can get you? A cheese
plate, perhaps? Spittoon?

JOE

That'll keep the rest out, but there's
plenty already in. We need more help!

JULIE

Pluto! Go get Donna!

PLUTO

Oh yes. Good idea. I must ensure her
safety!

PIPISTRELLE

Emma! Tell the guard to help fight the zombies!

COUNTER GIRL/EMMA

Cyril, please help these folks kill the zombies.

SECURITY/CYRIL

Very well. But there will be a corkage fee.

OLIVIA

Well, this is a proper mess.

LE BICHON FRISE

Oh, *bien*. The wee green is here to save the day.

OLIVIA

And why exactly are you just sitting there?

LE BICHON FRISE

Because *un*, I am the assassin for the 6748, and *deux*, I have not been paid for months.

Electric sizzle interrupts him, and **LBF** hollers in pain.

OLIVIA

Care to guess the last time I got paid? Get in there.

JOE

(winded from fighting) Where's Donna? And Pluto?

OLIVIA

Fighting off the zombies at the other entrance. Must say, they're much more efficient than you lot.

LE BICHON FRISE

Why are you asking? You do not need them when you have MOI! Hiiiya!

JULIE

(also winded) Where did the counter girl go?

JOE

Olivia, can you check on Captain Madeline? Last we saw her, she was headed for Claire's Boutique.

OLIVIA

Yeah, she's not there now.

JOE

Where is she?

OLIVIA

How the hell would I know? I wouldn't worry. Zombies traditionally want brains.

LE BICHON FRISE

I do not think so, for they are not attacking moi. Yah!

JOE

Go figure.

JULIE

Olivia, can YOU help us with these zombies? Spray 'em with acid or something?

OLIVIA

You're a bit vindictive, sheesh.

JULIE

They're trying to kill us!

OLIVIA

Are you sure that's what they're up to? Did you ask?

PIPISTRELLE

Should we?

OLIVIA

Sure, go on.

JULIE

Excuse me- Hey!

OLIVIA

(giggling) Seriously? George Romero is in Pod Bay 98, and you thought that would work?

Sounds of ping! ping! and yelps of pain from zombies. Sound gets closer and closer. The gate is lifted slightly, then allowed to crash back down.

PIPISTRELLE

Captain!

MADELINE

Back up, y'all. I've got this.

Ping! Ping! Yelp yelp!

JULIE

Is that ... an ear piercing gun? And what happened to your forehead?

MADELINE

Slightly modified, but yes. And it took a few tries to master the controls. Was anyone planning to come get me?

JOE

We were a little busy. How did you get through that crowd?

MADELINE

I was holed up in Claire's and down to firing hoops and danglies when this kid showed up and disappeared into the employee break room. When she came back out, I figured I could use her to get away. The zombies are scared of her, so I rode on her shoulders back here.

JULIE

And she got you through the gate. That's got to be the weirdest rescue ever.

JOE

Talk to Jessie about that some time. OK, that's the last of the ones in here.

OLIVIA

Congratulations. You managed a kill a bunch of already dead people.

LE BICHON FRISE

More! I must have more to fight! Let me out!

Sounds of blows and bodies hitting the floor. Throughout there is a distant sound of **LBF** attacking ... something. **LBF**, you should really sound blood-lusty and berzerker.

JOE

Whoa there, John Wayne Lacy-Cuffs, take it easy on the mannequins.

PLUTO

My love and I have vanquished the zombies at our back door, and she is returned to selecting sun screens for our next journey to San Helios. My fair lady burns easily. Hello, Captain! What has happened to your forehead?

PIPISTRELLE

We are safe for the moment, but that horde can wait forever. We need to figure a way out.

LE BICHON FRISE

Out! Yes! Where my prey awaits!

JULIE

Is he like this often?

JOE

I've never seen him like this before. What was in those perfumes?

PLUTO

Musk. Animal reproductive scent — I believe our assassin here is in rut. He seeks another ram to butt horns.

OLIVIA

Right. That's me out.

JULIE

Ew. So many words I don't want to hear.

LE BICHON FRISE

Killing is life! Ha ha!

SECURITY/CYRIL

Well, hello. May I interest you in a sample of our selection?

MADELINE

Uhhhh. Me?

SECURITY/CYRIL

Indeed.

MADELINE

What "selection" does a security guy have?

SECURITY/CYRIL

Do you prefer something dry? Leesy? Full-bodied? Oaky and rough? Or yeasty and young?

MADELINE

I have no idea what you're offering, but I want it.

PIPISTRELLE

Emma, who exactly is our Security Guard?

COUNTER GIRL/EMMA

Cyril was previously the sommelier at Crate and Barrel.

PLUTO

That would explain the towel over his arm. And the faint scent of tannins.

MADELINE

I guess it's a good thing Donna's getting sunscreen, then.

PLUTO

No, dear lady, tannins are- Is there any point?

JOE

Nope.

PIPISTRELLE

That explains why his zombie-fighting weapon of choice is a cork screw.

SECURITY/CYRIL
For you, Madame.

JOE
Where the hell did that come from?

MADELINE
Who cares? (gulp) Ahhhhhhhh, that
numbs the pain.

LE BICHON FRISE
Open the gate! Sésame, ouvre-toi!
(say-zahm, ooovreh twa)

The gate begins, creakily, to open.

LE BICHON FRISE
Ha ha!!!

JOE
"Open sesame"? Seriously? Damn your
stupid little games, Leet!

JULIE
Well, Aladdin's Castle is just across
the hall.

LE BICHON FRISE
Come to me, my little piggies!

PIPISTRELLE
How about you go to them? Oooof!

She pushes LBF under the gate, slams it back down.

LE BICHON FRISE
Oh, I am disappointed there are so few
of you!

More shouting from LBF. He's clearly winning.

MADELINE
Dang. He's mowing them down.

JULIE
I guess it's easier when they don't
fight back.

SECURITY/CYRIL
May we discuss your flocculation?

MADELINE

If it's so bad, just back away,
sheesh.

PLUTO

He means the particles in your wine.

MADELINE

Oh. Yeah, it's a bit gritty, I guess.

SECURITY/CYRIL

I see. Perhaps madam would care to
make another selection?

MADELINE

I don't think I made this one.

PIPISTRELLE

So, about our escape?

PLUTO

It appears Frise has nearly cleared
the path.

JOE

Good. At least we won't have to wait
around for a sandwich machine to
appear.

COUNTER GIRL/EMMA

Cyril - the mustard?

SECURITY/CYRIL

Ah, yes. I'm afraid I must confiscate
the pretzel.

PLUTO

No! Tell him this is my palate
cleanser!

MADELINE

Sure, why not. After all, this is why
I went to Captain school.

JULIE

Did you, though?

MADELINE

Shaddup. Cyril, the pretzel is a
palace cleanser.

PLUTO

Palate.

MADELINE

Whatever.

SECURITY/CYRIL

Ah. I see. That's ... problematic. I don't ... I can't ... but I must! But everyone deserves a clean palate! But my directive-

JOE

Is he starting to smoke? Ask him why the condiments are so important! Quick, before he blows!

MADELINE

What? What the hell are you talking about?

JOE

Just do it!

MADELINE

Cyril, why does the mustard matter?

SECURITY/CYRIL

What if he is a *terroirist*?

PLUTO

I fear his worlds are crashing together.

PIPISTRELLE

The condiments!

MADELINE

I'm trying! Cyril! *What about the mustard?!*

SECURITY/CYRIL

DEFEND THE PALATE!

Boom, crackle, thump - Cyril is down.

JULIE

Well, hell.

PLUTO

One might have hoped he'd have a

longer finish.

MADELINE

Ewwwwwwwww.

PLUTO

No, Captain. In wine the word
"finish"... I surrender. If gods could
weep, you would be the reason for my
tears.

PIPISTRELLE

Still no answers.

JULIE

Where did all the zombies come from?

LE BICHON FRISE

(sing song) All right, mes amis. You
can come out now.

JOE

Hang on. Is his bloodlust still up? I
don't plan on being on the receiving
end of a bottle of decongestant.

JULIE

I'd ask what that means, but I have
zombie in my hair.

JOE

Some other time.

PIPISTRELLE

Frise's body temperature and
adrenaline levels ping normal.

JOE

Good. Open sesame.

The gate moves upward, the sounds of an arcade fire up.

MADELINE

Ooooo! Looks like Aladdin's Castle is
open for business.

JULIE

Why didn't that happen when Frise said
it?

PIPISTRELLE

Maybe it doesn't speak French?

MADELINE

Last one in has a kong like a donkey!

PIPISTRELLE

Seriously, I have to ask-

JOE

Don't. Just ... give her some quarters.

NARRATORS' BRIDGE

N2

Noooooooo! Not yet! There's still a major unanswered question!

NARRATOR

Which is?

N2

Did Joe get a new bucket?

NARRATOR

He did. A Rubbermaid 15-quart roughneck. I'm sure they'll be very happy together. The condiment mystery continues, though.

N2

And the mystery of why Leet messed with all the animatronics.

NARRATOR

If, in fact, he did. As of now, that's just a theory. Now that the mall's been cleared of zombies, I think I might amble down and check out the mics at Radio Shack. Care to join me?

N2

Ooo, yes! Credits first?

NARRATOR

Of course. You start.

N2

You've been listening to...
Chrisi Talyn Saje as Julie

Sarah Rhea Werner as Pipistrelle
Eric Perry as Joe
Aaron Clark as Le Bichon Frise

NARRATOR

Shannon Perry as Madeline and Olivia
Lee Shackelford as Pluto
introducing my kiddo, Michaela Nadolny
Gourley as Emma, the Counter Girl and
John Dowgin of Mission: Rejected as
Cyril the Security Guy.

N2

I'm Kyle Jones as your Narrator
Two....

NARRATOR

And I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley as your
Narrator.

N2

Our music is composed and performed by
John Faley; Lucas Elliott creates our
artwork.

NARRATOR

Sarah Golding is our dialogue editor,
and Chrisi Talyn Saje is our sound
engineer. Oz 9 is written by Shannon
Perry.

N2

Wrap it up! My next Sennheiser awaits!

NARRATOR

Keep your hands off my Sennheiser,
Two! We'll see you next time, Space
Monkeys. Keep reaching for the stars,
and enjoy the flocculation.

As they walk away...

N2

Was that really necessary?

NARRATOR

Oh come on, it's funny.

N2

Wine snob humor. With *this* audience?

NARRATOR

Eh. I can hope. Lights.

Sound of lights going out, door closes behind them.